

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00723 041042Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----041047Z 124262 /21

O P 041005Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3215
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

S E C R E T MUSCAT 0723

EXDIS

E.O. 116528
GDS
TAGS: PFOR MU US
SUBJECT: MASIRAH ISLAND

REF: STATE 100463

1. REFTEL ARRIVED CONVENIENTLY JUST BEFORE MY MAY 4 APPOINTMENT WITH FONMIN UNDERSECRETARY AL-ALAWI. I HANDED HIM COPY OF CURRENT PRESS GUIDANCE ON MASIRAH (RECEIVED IN APRIL FROM NEA/ARP) AND SAID I WISHED ASK HIM, IN ABSENCE OF MINISTER ZAWAWI WITH WHOM I HAD DISCUSSED MASIRAH MARCH 26, WHETHER OMANGOV HAS ANY MESSAGE FOR ME TO CONVEY WHILE IN WASHINGTON.

2. AL-ALAWI, CLAIMING HE WAS FULLY INFORMED OF HOW MASIRAH MATTERS STAND, REPLIED THAT WE WOULD SOON BE RECEIVING VIA FOREIGN MINISTRY A NOTE PREPARED IN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE RESPONDING TO MY MARCH 26 APPROACH. SAID IT WOULD BE READY FOR US VERY SHORTLY AFTER ZAWAWI RETURNS TO OMAN MAY 12. HE STATED IT WOULD MAINLY DISCUSS THE LOGISTICAL OR SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO THE LIST I HAD SUBMITTED MARCH 26. HE ADDED THAT THIS WEEK'S OMANI/BAC AIR DEFENSE COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS IN LONDON, IN WHICH VARIOUS CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS ARE ENGAGED INCLUDING SOAF COMMANDER BENNETT, PREVENTED AN EARLIER RESPONSE TO US.

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ALAWI VOLUNTEERED THAT ONE ASPECT TO BE COVERED IN THE NOTE WAS MATTER OF ESTABLISHING AIR-TO-GROUND COMMUNICATIONS LIAISON BETWEEN OUR MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN THE REGION AND SOAF AIRFIELD

AT MASIRAH.

3. I SAID I PLAN TO BE IN LONDON FROM MID-MORNING MAY 9

THROUGH MAY 10 EN ROUTE TO WASHINGTON AND ASKED IF MINISTER ZAWAWI MIGHT STILL BE THERE, IN WHICH CASE I WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO PAY MY RESPECTS AND HEAR ANYTHING HE MIGHT WISH TO TELL ME PRIOR MY U.S. CONSULTATIONS. REPLYING, HE THOUGHT ZAWAWI PLANS DEPART LONDON SOMETIME MAY 9. HE VOLUNTEERED SEND A SIGNAL TO OMAN EMBASSY THERE TO MENTION MY QUERY TO THE MINISTER. I GAVE HIM KINSOLVING'S NAME AS AMEMBASSY LONDON OFFICER FOR POSSIBLE LIAISON.

4. FOR KINSOLVING IN LONDON: PLEASE INQUIRE ABOUT ZAWAWI'S PLANS FOR REMAINING LONDON, SEEKING TO ARRANGE FOR ME CALL ON HIM IF TIMING PERMITS AND IF THIS IS DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE FROM HIS STANDPOINT. AM SCHEDULED ARRIVE HEATHROW MAY 9 ON GF 121 AT 0645 LONDON TIME, SO MEETING ANYTIME FROM MID-MORNING ON THAT DAY, OR MAY 10, POSSIBLE FOR ME. AS TO PURPOSE YOU MIGHT TAKE SAME LINE I DID WITH AL-ALAWI (PARA 3).

5. COMMENT: AFRAID I STILL HAVE NO GOOD INSIGHT ON JUST HOW OMANIS INTEND TO PLAY THIS ONE, WHICH IS ALL THE MORE REASON TO ATTEMPT SEE ZAWAWI IN LONDON IF POSSIBLE. INCIDENTALLY, QUESTION OF C-130S HAS NOT BEEN RAISED WITH US RECENTLY OTHER THAN BY CORRESPONDENT JOE FITCHETT OF LONDON OBSERVER AND WASHINGTON POST. I WELCOME POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY SEE ASSTSEC ATHERTON MAY 10.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, MILITARY BASES, MASIRAH ISLAND, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MUSCAT00723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770156-0312
Format: TEL
From: MUSCAT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770596/aaaademt.tel
Line Count: 87
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 005a8c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 STATE 100463
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2645247
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MASIRAH ISLAND
TAGS: PFOR, MU, US, (AL ALAWI), (ZAWAWI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/005a8c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009